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10/531,465	01/08/2007	Horst-Michael Beier	BEIE3001/JEK	1375
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/531,465

Applicant(s)

BEIER ET AL.

Examiner

APRIL C. INYARD

Art Unit

1794

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-36 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-36 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 15 April 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SF/ICE)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 04-15-2005
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: ____

DETAILED ACTION

Examiner's Notes

1. **Claims 14 and 15** refer to a "fine-scale" or "irregular" structure formed by the first and second areas of the additional layer adhesive strength to the cover sticker and object. The Examiner interprets the term "fine-scale" as described in par. [0020] of the present disclosure, as any pattern that intentionally coordinates with the concealed information "so that the information to be secured is divided into a multiplicity of small areas by detachment of the cover sticker". The Examiner notes, however, that such a "fine-scale" structure may also be "irregular" so long as "the readability of the information parts remaining on the object" is reduced.

Claim Objections

2. **Claims 5 and 30** are objected to because of the following informalities: The Examiner interprets Claim 5 as an assemble according to Claim 1 that may have more than one additional layer comprising an object with a lacquer layer and ink layer disposed on the object in this order. The phrase "as the ink layer or lacquer layer" is confusing and does not have any contextual relevance to Claims 5 or 30 as it does in Claim 1 in consideration of the fact that Claims 5 and 30 are limiting the either/or of Claim 1 to a specific lacquer layer with an upper ink layer disposed thereon—the lacquer layer cannot be applied to the object as both the "ink layer or lacquer layer" if the lacquer layer is not an ink layer. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

4. **Claims 1, 5, 6, 9, 18, 28, 30, and 32** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The “lacquer”, “UV lacquer” or “non-stick lacquer” of the instant claims is lacking the written description requirement. A skilled artisan would appreciate that a lacquer in the most general sense is any resinous material that is typically applied to the surface of an object as either a protective coating or as an adhesive. Further, it would be obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art that the general term “lacquer” or “non-stick lacquer” includes a wide variety of solvent-based solutions that could essentially form a plastic-like thin-film or sheet coating on a surface, e.g. multiple polyurethane coatings. However, the instant claims and present disclosure merely mention the terms “lacquer”, “UV lacquer” and “non-stick lacquer” as such without any further detailed explanation or working examples. Likewise, without defining what the Applicant means by “UV lacquer”, a skilled artisan would understand that this could mean a lacquer that either cures by UV radiation or a lacquer that absorbs ultraviolet energy to promote weatherability of a surface to which the lacquer layer is applied. Therefore, these terms are interpreted broadly by the Examiner as would be understood to one of ordinary skill in the art

to mean any type of layer that may either cure by UV radiation or absorb UV rays, and that may impart a non-stick feature to the assembly, e.g. a plastic sheet layer could be formed from a lacquer having the aforementioned properties.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

6. **Claims 1-2, 4-5, 7-9, 12, 21, 23-29 and 35-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Annacone et al. (US Pub. 2002/0020739 A1).**

(Claims 1, 12, 23-29 and 35-36) Figures 12F and 12H are from Annacone ('739):

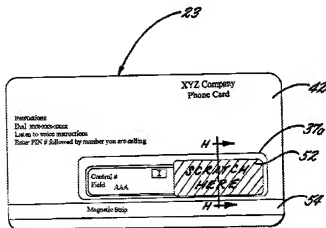
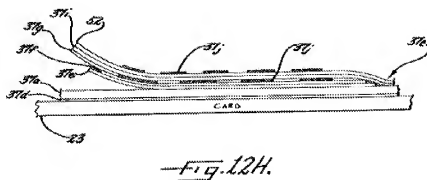


FIG. 12F.



Annacone ('719) teaches an assembly and method for making an assembly ('739; Fig. 12F—element 37):

7.

- a. having information to be secured ('739; Figs. 12H: Labeled element 37j)
- b. comprising an object such as a bank card or phonecard on which the information, such as a character string like a PIN number is to be secured ('739; Fig. 12H: Labeled element 23)
- c. a security cover sticker is an adhesive label having a base area smaller than the object and covering the information to be secured ('739; Fig. 12 F: labeled element 37 comprises the entire label, where Fig. 12H: element 37c is the top most cover having an adhesive disposed on the backside; par. [0048])
- d. wherein an additional layer is disposed between the object and the information to be secured ('739; Fig. 12H: labeled elements 37e and 37f comprise releasable film layer 37b; par. [0045])

e. and the cover sticker has a larger base area than the additional layer ('739; Fig. 12H: element 37C)

f. said additional layer comprising an ink layer disposed directly on the object and the adhesive strength of the additional layer to the cover sticker is greater at least in partial areas than the adhesive strength of the additional layer to the object ('739; *releasable film layer 37b could be formed as an ink layer that is releasable, and therefore has a greater affinity for the cover sticker than the object*—Note: The interpretation of “at least in partial areas” can mean an overall greater adhesion to the cover sticker than the object):

(Claims 2, 4, 7-8, 34) Annacone ('739) teaches the assembly of Claims 1 and 28, wherein the information to be secured is printed on the additional ink layer by an ink jet process, wherein the additional layer, located under the information to be secured, is formed by a monochrome ink layer wherein the color of the ink layer produces high contrast between the information and the ink layer ('739; par. [0047]: the PIN code is printed such as by ink jet printing onto the opaque white ink part of the releasable film layer 37b—the Examiner notes that the teaching of an opaque white ink will provide contrast to the information printed thereon).

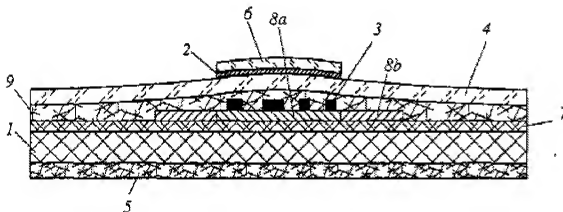
(Claims 5 and 9) As interpreted under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, Annacone ('739) discloses the assembly of Claim 1, wherein the additional layer can be more than one layer comprising at least one upper ink layer and at least one “lacquer” layer disposed between the object and the upper ink layer ('739; Fig. 12H: labeled element 37e—releasable, i.e. non-stick, film made of plastic; Fig. 12H: labeled element 37d is an adhesive that could be in the form of a “lacquer”; pars. [0010], [0031], [0046]).

Further, with respect to **Claims 5 and 9**, Annacone ('739) teaches that the releasable film layer could be formed not only from a plastic film, but also "as an ink layer that is opaque and releasable, or a first releasable ink layer followed by an additional opaque ink layer or series of ink layers" ('739; *par* [0046]). Therefore, Annacone teaches a second ink layer disposed between the lacquer layer and the upper ink layer located under the information to be secured.

(Claim 21) Annacone ('739) teaches the assembly of Claim 1, wherein the additional layer can be formed from an ink layer that is opaque and releasable ('739; *par*. [0046]) and can be printed on the object ('739; *par*. [0061]: *the label can be applied as component parts serially as in application of the opaque label strip, followed by code printing...*).

8. **Claims 1, 4-8, 23, 25-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Fleischauer et al. (DE 10109964 A1).**

(Claims 1, 4-8, 23, 25-28) Fleischauer ('964) teaches an assembly security sticker shown in Fig. 1 below:



(Claims 1, 4, 8 and 12) Fleischauer ('964) teaches that the security label secures information such as coding and pin codes (*page 1, par. 2*) and is applied to an object (*page 1,*

pars. 2 and 4--documents and motor vehicles) where the information to be secured is printed (*page 2, par. 6; Fig. 1--information layer 3*) on an additional ink or lacquer layer that is a size of the information field to be secured (*page 2, par. 6; Fig. 1--rear dye film 8 and retroreflective coating 7, interpreted to be a lacquer*) an object or base layer (*page 2, par. 6, Fig. 1--layer 1*) wherein the color of the additional layer is specifically selected to contrast the color of the information printed thereon (*page 2, par. 6*) and the adhesive strength of the additional layer to the cover sticker, which is an adhesive label having a base area larger than the additional layer (*Fig. 1—layers 2, 4 and 6 are cover sticker, layer 9 is adhesive*) is greater at least in partial areas than the adhesive strength of the additional layer to the object (*page 2, par. 2*).

(Claim 5) Fleischauer ('964) further teaches that the additional layer is formed by a multi-ply layer and comprises at least one upper ink layer (*Fig. 1, dye film 8a and 8b*) and at least one lacquer layer (*Fig. 1, retroreflective coating layer 7*) disposed between the object (*Fig. 1, base film 1*) and the upper ink layer.

(Claim 6) Fleischauer ('964) teaches that the assembly should preferably be UV stable so that it does not become destroyed by sun exposure (*page 2, par. 4*) and thus teaches use of UV stable components such as UV lacquer.

(Claim 7) Fleischauer ('964) teaches the ink layer located under the information is formed by a monochrome ink layer (*Fig. 1—dye film 8a located under information layer 3; page 2, par. 6*).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

9. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

10. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

11. **Claims 3, 6, 10-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Annacone et al. (US Pub. 2002/0020739 A1).**

(Claim 3) Annacone ('739) discloses an assembly that meets the limitations of Claim 1 (*see above*) and further teaches that the additional layer is preferably an opaque white color ('739; *par.* [0047]). Annacone does not specifically teach use of a black ink for printing the information to be secured on the additional layer.

However, at the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to use a black ink for printing on the opaque white layer taught by Annacone ('739) because this is not only one of the most commonly used and readily available pigments, but a skilled artisan would recognize that black ink on an opaque white background is optimal for clarity and discovering an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine

skill in the art. *In re Boesch*, 617 F.2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980). Furthermore, matters relating to ornamentation only which have no mechanical function cannot be relied upon to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. *In re Seid*, 161 F.2d 229, 73 USPQ 431 (CCPA1947).

(Claim 6) Annacone ('739) teaches an assembly that meets the limitations of Claim 5 (*see above*) but does not specifically disclose the use of a UV lacquer. However, as interpreted under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, one of ordinary skill in the art appreciate that the "releasable plastic film" taught by Annacone ('739) could be cured by UV radiation or be a plastic that absorbs UV light. Utilization of UV-curable and/or UV-absorbing plastics is replete in the art, and it would be obvious to a skilled artisan to choose a suitable material for plastic film taught by Annacone ('739) for the intended application as a matter of obvious engineering choice. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416.

(Claims 10-11) Annacone ('739) discloses an assembly that meets the limitations of Claim 9 (*see above*), except for specifically teaching that the second ink layer either has an irregular pattern (Claim 10) or contains blind information whose character corresponds to the information to be secured (Claim 11). However, as Annacone discloses that the purpose of the ink layers is to obscure or conceal the secured information such that the information cannot be viewed from the backside if the label is removed ('739; *par. [0009]*), it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to print the second ink layer with an irregular pattern or with blind information as both of these design choices are matters relating to ornamentation only which have no mechanical function and cannot be relied upon to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. *In re Seid*, 161 F.2d 229,

73 USPQ 431 (CCPA1947); and since a skilled artisan would appreciate that printing the second ink layer in such a manner would achieve the purpose taught by Annacone ('739), which is to conceal the secured information, it has been held that the configuration was a matter of choice which a person of ordinary skill in the art would have found obvious absent persuasive evidence that the particular configuration claimed was significant. *In re Dailey*, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966).

12. Claims 13-20, and 30-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Annacone et al. (US Pub. 2002/0020739 A1) and Fleischauer et al. (DE 10109964 A1) in view of Pekko (US Patent No. 3,631,617).

(Claims 13-20, 30 and 32) Annacone ('739) and Fleischauer ('964) disclose an assembly that meets the limitations of Claims 1 and 28, but do not specifically describe a differential adhesive strength of the additional layer to the cover sticker and object in first and second areas.

However, it is replete in the tamper-proof labeling art to provide areas with differential adhesive strengths such that upon removal of said label, the label is torn along the path of least resistance. Pekko ('617) teaches the limitations of claims 13-19 with respect to differential adhesion of the additional layer first and second areas to the cover film and object.

Pekko ('617) teaches a multi-layered tamper-proof label having an adhesive base, and a masking film sandwiched between the adhesive base and a self-supporting film, wherein information may be printed on the top or underside of the self-supporting film, on the top side of the masking film, or both; and the adhesiveness of the masking film to the base adhesive layer is greater than to the self-supporting film because of limited or partial adhesivity to the self-

supporting film, or because of the presence of a release coating such that when the self-supporting film is removed, all or part of the information and masking film will remain on the base adhesive ('617; *Figs. 1-3; Col 3, lines 11-41*). Pekko ('617) further teaches that the structure of the differentially adhesive areas can be fine-scale or irregular ('617; *Fig. 3*).

Additionally, Pekko ('617) discloses that differential adhesion of the masking layer to either the base adhesive or the self-supporting film may be achieved by application of "non-stick lacquers" ('617; *Col 3, line 18*), partial application of an adhesive ('617; *Col 3, lines 16-17*), and application of printable inks known to have poor adhesive affinity for the self-supporting film ('617; *Col 3, lines 18-27*), and likewise the self-supporting film may be treated in specific portions to be more compatible and adhere to areas of the masking film ('617; *Col 3, lines 29-41*) such that when the cover sticker is removed, the information to be secured will be destroyed and reduce the ability to be counterfeited ('617; *Col 2, lines 25-27*).

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify the assembly taught by Annacone ('739) and Fleischauer ('964) to include areas on the additional layer of differential adhesion to the object and cover sticker in either a fine-scale or irregular structure achieved by adjusting the adhesive strength through use of adhesion promoters or "non-stick lacquers" by printing as taught by Pekko ('617) because this feature provides an additional security and tamper-proof advantage.

(Claim 31) Annacone ('739) and Fleischauer ('964) in view of Pekko ('617) teach the method of making an assembly that meets the limitations of Claim 30 (*see above*), where Annacone ('739) teaches that the additional layer can be a series of ink layers ('739; *par [0046]*) but does not specifically teach that these additional ink layers are specifically different colors

and/or patterns, although refers to the series of ink layers as “different inks” (‘739; *par.* [0050]) and discloses the printing of additional indicia or patterns that are different than the other ink layers on the top of a scratch-off layer (‘739; *Fig. 12H: labeled element 37j on top of scratch-off layer 52; par.* [0048]).

However, Fleischauer (‘964) teaches use of a different colored inks (*Fig. 1—dye films 8a and 8b*).

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to use the different colors and/or patterns for the additional ink layers as the additional ink layers applied to the ink layer present because both Annacone (‘739) and Pekko (‘617) teach the importance of improving the anti-counterfeit nature of assemblies for objects such as bank cards and phonecards, and as Annacone (‘739) and Fleischauer (‘964) both teach an additional ink layer having a different color and/or pattern, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use this type of ink layer as the series of ink layers taught by Annacone (‘739) on top of the additional layer, since it has been held that rearranging parts of an invention involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Japikse*, 86 USPQ 70.

13. Claims 22 and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Annacone et al. (US Pub. 2002/0020739 A1) in view of Feilen et al. (US Pub. 2002/0028321 A1).

Annacone ('739) discloses an assembly and method that meet the limitations of Claims 21 and 28 as discussed above, but does not specifically teach that the additional layer is printed on the object by an offset process.

Annacone ('739) does, however, specifically teach that the information to be protected is ink jet printed (*see above*) but does not particularly state the method by which the additional layer is printed. Moreover, Annacone ('739) specifically teaches that the additional layer is an opaque white ink (*see above*) and teaches printing of a scratch-off layer to conceal the sensitive information ('739; Fig. 12H: *element 52*). The Examiner therefore interprets the teaching of Annacone ('739) broadly in that the opaque white ink additional layer may be printed using any process known in the art.

Feilen ('321) teaches a method of offset printing, particularly in the context of printing scratch-off ink layers and high quality single and multiple layers of different colored scratch-off material ('321; *Abstract; pars. [0003], [0006]-[0007] and [0013]*). Feilen discloses that offset printing is often used in applications such as lottery tickets that contain information that is to be secured ('321; *par. [0004]*). Furthermore, Feilen teaches that it is known in using the offset process to print such types of material, UV lacquer layers are commonly used as primer layers applied over the object ('321; *par. [0014]*).

Annacone ('739) discloses the claimed invention except for use of the offset printing process for the additional layer. However, as Annacone discloses use of an opaque white ink for the additional layer and does not specifically teach how the printing of this layer on the object is achieved, it would be obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to use the offset printing process taught by Feilen ('321) because this method is commonly used for application of opaque

inks such as scratch-off inks and has advantages that include reduced labor and equipment costs, increased efficiency and is a more automated printing process.

14. **Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fleischauer et al. (DE 10109964 A1).**

(Claim 3) Fleischauer ('964) teaches use of an ink color beneath the information layer to provide contrast. Therefore, it would be obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to use a black ink for the information layer as black stands out on most backgrounds that provide contrast.

15. **Claims 2, 9-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fleischauer et al. (DE 10109964 A1) in view of Annacone ('739).**

(Claims 2, 9-11) Fleischauer ('964) and Annacone ('739) teach an assembly that meets the limitations of Claim 1 as discussed above. Fleischauer teaches that the information is laser printed and a second ink layer that is a different color from the first ink layer ('964; *Fig. 1, dye layer 8b; page 2, par. 6*) but fails to specifically teach that this ink layer is disposed between the lacquer layer and the upper ink layer under the information.

However, Annacone ('739) discloses a series of ink layers beneath the ink jet printed information layer (*see above*).

At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to ink jet print the information as taught by Annacone ('739) instead of laser print the information as taught by Fleischauer ('964) as a matter of engineering choice. As Fleischauer

(‘964) and Annacone (‘739) teach similar processes and structures to the instant claims. It has been held that where the claimed and prior art products are identical or substantially identical in structure or are produced by identical or a substantially identical processes, a *prima facie* case of either anticipation or obviousness will be considered to have been established over functional limitations that stem from the claimed structure. *In re Best*, 195 USPQ 430, 433 (CCPA 1977), *In re Spada*, 15 USPQ2d 1655, 1658 (Fed. Cir. 1990). The *prima facie* case can be rebutted by evidence showing that the prior art products do not necessarily possess the characteristics of the claimed products. *In re Best*, 195 USPQ 430, 433 (CCPA 1977).

Furthermore, it would have been obvious to a skilled artisan at the time the invention was made to place the additional second ink layer of a different color taught by Fleischauer (‘964) beneath the information layer as taught by Annacone (‘739) because a skilled artisan would recognize that this adds to the security properties of the assembly and it would simply require a rearrangement of the layers taught by Fleischauer (‘964) which is held to involve only routine skill in the art. *In re Japikse*, 86 USPQ 70.

Conclusion

16. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- a. Gauch et al. (US Patent 4,057,919) teaches differential adhesion of a laminated ID card to prevent tampering and theft.

14. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to APRIL C. INYARD whose telephone number is (571) 270-1245. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Thursday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Donald Tarazano can be reached on (571) 272-1515. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/D. Lawrence Tarazano/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1794

APRIL C. INYARD /A. C. I./
Examiner, Art Unit 1794